

20 August 1968

Logistic Developments in the Panhandle of North Vietnam, 12-18 August, 1968Activities South of the 19th ParallelArmed Reconnaissance SortiesThis Week (12-18 August) *Last Week (5-11 August)

354 sorties per day

429 sorties per day

68 percent in Route Package I

64 percent in Route Package I

22 percent in Route Package II

29 percent in Route Package II

10 percent in Route Package III
(below 19° North)7 percent in Route Package III
(below 19° North)For the Period 1 January - 18 August 1968

262 sorties per day

61 percent in Route Package I

23 percent in Route Package II

16 percent in Route Package III **

Weather ***

Above 19°: Poor weather covered the entire area through the first four days of the week, while generally good weather persisted the balance of

* The rate of attack for the period 12-18 August may be as much as five percent below the actual rate because some reports from operating units in Southeast Asia are not available at the time of publication.

** Beginning 1 April nearly all sorties have been flown south of the 19th Parallel.

*** Good weather - 10,000 feet or more ceiling, and five miles or more visibility.

Fair weather - 5-10 thousand feet ceiling, and five miles or more visibility.

Poor weather - Less than 5,000 feet ceiling, and/or five miles or less visibility.

USAF and DIA review(s) completed.

the period.

Below 19°: Generally poor weather prevailed over the North Vietnamese Panhandle throughout the seven-day period.

Highways

	<u>Preliminary Pilot Reports on Trucks*</u>		
	<u>Sighted**</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
This Week (12-18 Aug)	378	69	45
Last Week (5-11 Aug)	727	130	106
Weekly Average (since 1 Apr 68)	710	118	82
Weekly Average (since 1 Jan 68)	538	85	67

Remarks:

Counts of truck sightings within the NVN Panhandle dropped sharply this past week. Compared with last weeks totals and the weekly average totals noted since 1 April, the number of trucks sighted and also the number of trucks reported destroyed or damaged decreased by almost fifty percent. This significant reduction in the observed truck activity can in large part be attributed to the stormy weather conditions prevailing through the first half of the week causing restricted armed reconnaissance and FAC coverage. Moreover, reports from pilots of muddy roads and flooding indicate that the poor weather adversely affected enemy truck operations.

The typical sighting of truck movement continued this week to be

* These are preliminary data, included to indicate trends in activity. Final data on trucks sighted, destroyed and damaged may be considerably greater, for the above compilations are based on incompleting reporting.

** Beginning with the period 5-11 August additional information provided by Forward Air Controllers on truck sightings and BDA has been incorporated into the CIA truck data base.

limited to groups of three or less, with only a few moderate-sized truck concentrations reported. The largest convoy, of about 30 trucks, was sighted at night moving south over Route 72 several miles south of the junction of Routes 7 and 15 located near the 19th Parallel. At least 18 trucks in this convoy were reported destroyed or damaged. A similar size convoy was sighted and attacked last week on Route 71, a parallel route to 72. These convoys are possibly associated with a large rail/highway transshipment and storage area recently confirmed just north of the 19th Parallel (see section on Logistic Activity between the 19th and 20th Parallels). Apparently, through rail service from Thanh Hoa terminates at this point and the North Vietnamese are relying heavily on truck transport for further logistical movements south.

Farther south, several groups of 10-15 trucks were sighted inland on Routes 15, 101 and 110 during the week.

Roadwatch Teams

		Total Trucks Counted for Period		
		<u>Latest</u> <u>Period</u>	<u>Previous</u> <u>Period</u>	<u>Weekly Average</u> <u>1968</u>
Route 15	[REDACTED]	(11-14 Aug)	(3-9 Aug)	
north of Mu Gia Pass)		44S; 53N	47S; 123N	182S; 161N *
		(12-14 Aug)**	(4-10 Aug)	
Route 912		11S; 15N	20S; 35N	N.A

Remarks:

The team on Route 912

[REDACTED] traffic it reports, therefore,

* Includes information from reports of other teams positioned near the border from January - June 1968.

** Covers 22 hours during three days.

may not represent all the traffic passing over the road by its position.

Railroads

	<u>Preliminary Pilot Reports on Railroad Cars</u>		
	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
This Week (12-18 Aug)	29	1	9
Last Week (5-11 Aug)	11	0	0
Weekly Average (since 1 Apr 68)	14	1	2
Weekly Average (since 1 Jan 68)	29	3	6

Remarks:

During the past week attacks against the railroad system were concentrated against the small meter-guage tram-cars on the tramway south of Vinh. Strikes were conducted against several boxcars, flatcars, and truck locomotives about ten miles south of Bai Duc Thom. In addition to the rail cars destroyed and damaged in the table above, two truck - locomotives were also damaged.

Waterways

	<u>Preliminary Pilot Reports of Watercraft*</u>		
	<u>Sighted</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>	<u>Damaged</u>
This Week (12-18 Aug)	758	130	124
Last Week (5-11 Aug)	565	65	87
Weekly Average (since 1 Apr 68)	421	65	77
Weekly Average (since 1 Jan 68)	315	48	62

* Includes reports of Sea Dragon spotter aircraft working in conjunction with the Rolling Thunder program. Losses under this arrangement have always been considered Rolling Thunder losses.

Remarks:

During the past week, pilot sightings and reports of destruction and damage of waterborne logistics craft, which include barges, junks, boats, sampans, rafts, pirogues, and canoes, increased over the previous week's total. While this week's total was well above the weekly average since 1 April, it was significantly below the record high of 1,283 sightings during the week of 22-28 July. The generally poor weather which affected truck sightings during the week, particularly on inland routes, apparently did not prevent watercraft from being detected along the coast. Most of the sightings were on the Cua Sot, north of Ha Tinh, and at Quang Khe, Dong Hoi, and Vinh. Approximately 100 small boats were sighted around mid-day on 16 August near Dong Hoi. Attacks resulted in secondary fires and explosions. Other watercraft activity was noted south of Dong Hoi along the coast. While most strikes were directed against watercraft, the transshipment areas at Vinh, Ben Thuy, Linh Cam, and Tien Luong were also attacked.

Logistic Activity Between the 19th and 20th Parallels

The existence of an extensive rail to road transshipment area was confirmed in photography [] at the intersection of Routes 1A and 7001, about one mile north of the 19th Parallel and about 30 miles north of Vinh. The area consists of a 1,500 foot rail spur which extends west from the main line along Route 7001, another rail spur which parallels the main line south of the intersection of Routes 1A and 7001, several rail/road transshipment areas, and a locomotive turntable. These facilities did not appear in [] photography. Several stacks of unidentified material and POL drums are located along the rail spurs and several rail cars

in the area are loaded with supplies. A total of 16 railroad cars and four truck locomotives were observed [REDACTED]

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The logistic activity at this point is extremely significant and is prob-

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[REDACTED]

northern border of the bombing area, it offers a convenient transshipment/storage area within a sanctuary area for the movement of goods into the region that is being bombed. In addition, it is about two miles north of the bridges at Dien Chau, where constant attacks have rendered through rail traffic impossible since about mid-May. Thus, it appears this point is the southern terminus of through rail service south of Thanh Hoa. The new turntable was apparently installed to facilitate the turn-around of truck locomotives. The establishment of extensive rail to road transshipment areas at this location indicates that the North Vietnamese rely mainly on highway and water transport to move goods farther south.

The area is well situated near key road and water routes. The Song Bang River, one mile east of the rail spur, connects with the Song Ca River at Vinh. Highway Route 1A, a major north-south highway provides access to Routes 7, 71, and 15 for inland movements. Route 7001 extends in a south-westerly direction and meets Route 7 about 15 miles from the transshipment point. Truck traffic can then continue west on Route 7 to Laos or to Route 72, a major inland alternate to Route 1A for southbound movements. In addition, Route 7001 intersects Route 7 near Route 71, another key inland alternate to Route 1A. Recent photography has revealed several improvements

along Route 71 and the construction of several new POL and ammunition storage areas along Route 72. Moreover, several relatively large southbound truck convoys have recently been sighted and attacked on these two routes, confirming their use for the southbound logistic flow. On the night of 8 August a 30 truck convoy was attacked and heavily damaged on Route 71 near the junction of Route 1A about 10 miles north of Vinh. A similar size convoy was sighted moving southward on Route 72 on the night of 17 August. Repeated attacks against this convoy resulted in at least 18 destroyed or damaged trucks along with several large secondary explosions and POL-type fires.

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